

# Dance Index



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LA PETITE AUGUSTA.

Aged 12 Years

In the Character of ZOLOË, in the Bayadere.

Printed & Publ<sup>d</sup> by H.R. Robinson, 52 Court St. N.Y.



AUGUSTA MAYWOOD

Impareggiabile Danzatrice.

*Si viva nella Sennarca del 52*

# Dance Index

## Founders

BAIRD HASTINGS  
PAUL MAGRIEL

## Editors

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN  
DONALD WINDHAM

## Comment

Miss Winter's study of Augusta Maywood is of signal importance for several reasons. Maywood was the first American to assume an international importance and our only dancer in the nineteenth century to occupy a position equal to the world renown of our own great contemporary triumvirate, Duncan, St. Denis, and Loie Fuller.

For Maywood, as will be seen, was a *ballerina*. She transcends by far, for example, the more purely local figure of a Mary Ann Lee, a Julia Turnbull, or even a Lola Montes. She was more than a great American. Her work was that of a great artist.

There were other great figures in the ballet of her epoch. The Ravels, who were French, Bonfanti and Sangalli, who were Italian. But though they were European, their reputation in Europe never equalled Maywood's.

The efficient and imaginative scholarship of Miss Winter is not new to American dance enthusiasts, but it is remarkable that in the press of wartime duties she has been able to erect such a solid monument to this neglected worthy.

Only George Washington Smith, the partner of Lola Montes and our first native-born *premier danseur*, also deserves such a detailed study of his half century career, and we hope Miss Winter will be in a position to offer it within the year.

## Acknowledgements

Before the curtain rises on Augusta Maywood, I wish to set forth my gratitude to Dr. William Van Lennap, Curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection. He had independently become interested in Maywood's career, and made a most exhaustive examination of all accessible Italian journals of the *Risorgimento*, as well as all annuals and newspapers which might yield the veriest minutiae. When he learned that this monograph was in progress he generously made all of his material available and extended every possible courtesy to me.

M.H.W.

Cover: La Petite Augusta (see Iconography, page 19, No. 2)

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# AUGUSTA MAYWOOD

BY

## MARIAN HANNAH WINTER

In 1825 Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Williams became the parents of a girl child, christened Augusta, who was destined to become our first — and to date our only — great internationally famous prima ballerina. An expatriate whose private life was an enigma, whose reputation in Europe was comparable to Loie Fuller's and Isadora's, and whose professional integrity and superb artistry were constant factors, she was compared only to the greatest — Elssler, Taglioni and Cerrito. Although Cyril Beaumont has sedulously ignored even her name, any history of ballet in nineteenth century Italy is incomplete without her record. She was most particularly associated with the last glorious years of classic romantic ballet, and the great star of its final transitional period. About her raged the most excoriating polemics of the American press, in a period of fluent invective. Her most vindictive calumniators unanimously considered her a great dancer.

In 1828 Martha Williams, with two small daughters, Mary Elizabeth and Augusta, was legally disengaged of H. A. Williams after they had finished an extensive acting tour in the southern theatres. She then met and married Robert Campbell Maywood, at that time one of the better-known actors and an enterprising, energetic theatrical manager as well. He had been instrumental in negotiating the American début of Mlle. Augusta, the French ballerina with the London following. He became manager and chief lessee of Philadelphia's Chestnut St. Theatre. From all contemporary accounts he expended considerable care and money in training his step-daughters, both of whom assumed his name. Mary Elizabeth, the elder, was extremely beautiful and an undistinguished actress, whose career holds no interest.

Augusta Maywood was a ballerina. Her early training was competently directed by Monsieur and

Madame Paul H. Hazard. Monsieur had done a stint at the Paris Opéra in minor capacities, Madame had been engaged at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, and the couple had toured a variety of German theatres. Their repertoire included Porte Saint Martin swashbucklers such as *La Délivrance des Grecs* and *Wild Girl of the Ardennes* (ballet-drama). The Hazards, incidentally, established themselves in Philadelphia and trained other local ballet luminaries, including the famous Wells sisters, Louise and Amelia.

Philadelphia journals announced the first appearance on any stage of the little Augusta (shortly a Gallic *la petite*) as a feature of her mother's benefit on Dec. 30, 1837, noting that she was a "Pupil of Mons. P. H. Hazard," in *Le Dieu et la Bayadère* (*The Maid of Cashmere*). This was the ballet-opera based on Goethe's ballad with a book by Scribe and music by D. F. E. Auber. First presented in 1830 at the Paris Opéra, with choreography by Filippo Taglioni designed to display the abilities of Marie, its American première was given by Mlle. Augusta for her début in 1836. It obtained an overwhelming success and remained in American repertoire beyond the middle of the century.

Francis Wemyss relates in his memoirs: "Zelica in the 'Maid of Cashmere' by a native American dancer is an era in the history of the stage worthy of the same page which sounds the praise of Edwin Forrest. Possessed of every requisite to acquire future fame; very ambitious; passionately fond of her art, Augusta Maywood won a triumph which her father should have improved to better advantage." (Wemyss meant to the parents' advantage.)

Augusta was an incontrovertible sensation, but engendered one of those seemingly indispensable ballet feuds, recorded thus by Wemyss: "There was another candidate for fame on this same 30th De-

\* Copyright, 1943, by Marian Hannah Winter.

cember, Miss Mary Ann Lee, who, in the trial dance, won for herself a reputation in public favor. The manager, justly proud of the success of his little daughter-in-law, was guilty of an injustice to the poor dependant girl, who aided her success. After Augusta's benefit had taken place, on the 5th of January, the citizens, anxious to afford Miss Lee some mark of their favor, applied to the manager to appoint a night for her benefit. This Mr. Maywood at first indignantly refused, as an insult to his dear child; and afterwards as foolishly granted. The excitement thus raised enabled Miss Lee to boast of a triumph over her more gifted competitor; wreaths were showered on the stage every night during the trial of skill, by the friends of both parties. They deserved these attentions from the audience; their success was but a just tribute to merit; and, if La Petite Augusta felt any jealous pang to mar her triumph, the injudicious conduct of her own parents toward 'our Mary Ann' as Miss Lee was now familiarly termed, was the sole cause. As a foil to her own excellence, Miss Lee would have been the most valuable auxiliary she could have found; in claiming to be her equal, for a time she lost ground; yet her career has been a profitable one, if not so brilliant as Augusta's. What a pity two such young creatures should have been separated with rancor in their hearts, when, united, they would have proved a source of mutual profit. The public felt proud of them, as children whose talent should be encouraged. As the companion and schoolfellow of my own children, I felt an interest in the success of Augusta Maywood, which induced me to peril my own interest, by loaning to the managers Mr. Russell Smith, to paint the scenery of '*La Sylphide*' which was the next part attempted by the juvenile dancer."

New York was shortly apprised of the child wonder by the Mirror, which on Feb. 3, 1838, reprinted this notice from the Philadelphia Inquirer, shortly before her Park Theatre début on February 12th: "The favorable impression made by this young creature on the night of her début, has been fully confirmed by her subsequent performances. She is, indeed, a most extraordinary child, and destined, we doubt not, to produce no ordinary sensation in the theatrical world. She is extremely youthful, being not more than eleven or twelve years of age; but her form is one of the most symmetrical that we ever looked upon, and her every movement is grace. This may seem extravagant

praise, but we believe we shall be fully borne out in it, by the thousands who have already witnessed her delightful acting and wonderful dancing. Her success on Friday night was perfect and complete. She surpassed herself, and proved to any who could have entertained a doubt before, that she is indeed a prodigy in her way, and fully entitled to the praise that has been so liberally lavished upon her. The best evidence of her merit, however, is the fact that she personated the character of Zelica six or eight times during the last fortnight, and never to any but a brilliant, fashionable and admiring audience. That a child of her age should have succeeded so thoroughly in a character which Celeste considered one of the most difficult in the whole range of dramatick opera, is surprising indeed, and a proper idea may be formed of her attraction, when we state that Saturday last, we heard an enterprising professional gentleman of this city, offer fifteen thousand dollars for her services, for a single year. We do not desire to be extravagant in a matter of this sort; but, as we perceive a disposition in other cities, to secure the services of Augusta for a brief engagement, we have thought this much due by way of explanation, as to the real character of her merits and success."

La Petite Augusta was a major sensation in New York. As the Mirror noted on February 24th, "Philadelphia has covered herself with glory in borrowing this native-born sprite of New York for a season, and returning her so rich in attractions to the home of her childhood. . . Her bright, pretty elfish face and ariel-like figure, the mingled grace and precision of her movements, and above all the wonderful muscular powers she displays for a child of twelve, can hardly be overrated in their attractions; while as a mere actress, her versatility of expression, both of feature and gesture, and her winning archness and finished byplay, impart to her performance a charm infinitely beyond her years."

During entr'actes Augusta recited *The Seven Ages of Woman* to ecstatic applause.

In addition to ephemeral plaudits, Augusta received the accolade of portraiture. Henry Inman, noted American artist who later painted Fanny Elssler in her loge, did a full-length portrait of *la petite*. The New York Mirror on March 31, 1838, reported: "One of the happiest things Inman ever did is his full-length portrait of this dancing fairy. He has caught the very elvish look of the eye that gives such piquancy to the turn of her head and

each movement of the buoyant and elastick figure. So life-like and natural is it, that it seems almost as if it would bound from the canvas. We hope to see it engraved in a style commensurate with its extraordinary merit." Unfortunately no print was made that is on record (the Robinson print seems an unlikely candidate) and the picture disappears from sight in 1846, when it was in the collection of one W. T. Porter.

The popular print market offered H. R. Robinson's *La Petite Augusta*, a becurled pretty child, without the gaucherie usual to her age. In *Bayadère* or as *Dew-Drop* in *The Mountain Sylph* (a ballad-opera thematically inspired by *La Sylphide*, occasionally billed under that title) she was acclaimed as a young divinity. Thus it was almost with a sense of bereavement that the Knickerbocker

Magazine in March, 1838, announced her departure for Paris, where her professional education was to be completed.

Maywood's colleague Weymss exclaimed: "How Manager Maywood, with his usual shrewdness, could have committed such a mistake as to suffer Augusta to proceed to Paris, until he had first gathered the dollars, which in America actually invited him to accept them, has surprised all his friends. A most brilliant future opened before the young lady, which a tour throughout the United States would have improved into fortune and independence; while one year so spent, would not have marred her prospects in France; for in Paris, the young American, *La Petite Sauvage*, would have been at any time regarded as a prodigy; petted, applauded and spoilt. As a novelty, sending dancers



Plate I. Gustavo Carey and Fanny Elssler in Faust. Vienna. ca. 1850

from North America to Paris, was carrying the war into Africa with a vengeance."

Paris had already heard of *la petite Augusta*. The *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, in its news column for June 24, 1838, reported that "despite religious austerity prevalent in the United States, New York splendidly acclaims pretty and svelte ballerinas. Madame Lecomte has recently excited transports of enthusiasm in the Dance of the Nuns from the third act of *Robert-le-diable*. People also speak of two young misses — Augusta Maywood and Miss Wells, as sharing American favor with Madame Lecomte." The paragraph, not too accurate, notes that Miss Wells is expected shortly in Paris; this was later corrected, and by the following July (1839), there was considerable talk of the "*jeune personnage de quatorze ans*" who was shortly to make her début.

Weymss conceded that the child was very ambitious, passionately fond of her art, and that "at the academy at Paris, she practiced with unremitting diligence." The flurry started around Augusta before her arrival was augmented by rumors of her astonishing class work under Mazillier and Corally. Charles de Boigne, in his *Petites Mémoires de l'Opéra* (Paris, 1857), said that "she danced, or rather gamboled, with a petulance and passion to divert and electrify the most measured pupils of Mazillier's class."

By Nov. 11th, 1839, scarcely fifteen years old, she was ready for the supreme test of any ballerina during that century — a Paris Opéra début. The Opéra prestige was unassailable; even an engagement in a minor capacity, entitling an artist to add "of the Paris Opéra" to his billing, was a tangible asset. An engagement as *première danseuse* was tantamount to a guarantee of a career. The Parisian audience, *Parisiens de Paris*, was the most brilliant intellectually, artistically and sartorially in the entire world. During this period, at a top-flight salon such as Nodier's, one might see Chopin, Musset, Nerval, Tony Johannot, Hugo, Balzac, Beyle, Dumas père, Vigny, Nanteuil and Devéria. A first night audience invariably included such knowledgeable people as *les frères Cogniard*, librettists and guiding genii of the Porte Saint Martin, Roger de Beauvoir, the critic and aesthetic arbiter Jules Janin, the protean Henri Monnier, Musard and Eugène Sue.

To this audience exoticism was almost a religion, whether of time as represented by a medieval lute,

or space, by the Oriental guzla. An extraordinary costume, a strange and bizarre background, were in themselves *à la mode*. These years saw the loveliest of Gavarni's *travestiments* — Oriental, Greek, Spanish. In her own fashion Augusta Maywood was an exotic, a *personnage bizarre*, by the mere fact of being there. Yet this receptive audience was discriminating and articulate. Théophile Gautier, most astute of all theatre critics, superlatively so of the dance, was able more than any other to catch the essential physical, technical and spiritual capacities of a performer. His review of Augusta's début on November 11th (one of the few, and the only major ballet criticism Mr. Beaumont has chosen to ignore in his translations from Gautier) was published on November 25th, 1839.

"The dance, for some time neglected at the Opéra, and which Mlle. Fanny Elssler alone has sustained on the points of her little feet, seems to have resumed a place of honor; fortunate débuts succeed one another; after Mlle. Lucile Grahn who comes to us from Denmark, behold now Mlle. Augusta Maywood who comes to us from America. Every part of the world seems to send us dancers; if this continues our corps de ballet will soon be the most cosmopolitan body one could see; Danes, Germans, Americans, English, are all found there; it is a veritable Babel with seventy-two idioms. Happily the language of the dance may be understood everywhere, and feet have no accent (*les pieds n'ont pas d'accent*).

"Mlle. Augusta Maywood has a completely clear-cut type of talent; it is not the melancholy grace, dreamy abandon and nonchalant lightness of Mlle. Grahn, who reflects in her eyes the clear and cold blue of the Norwegian sky, and who seems a walkyrie dancing on the snow; it is yet less the inimitable perfection, shining constancy, allure of a classic Diana and sculptural purity of Mlle. Fanny Elssler; it is something abrupt, unexpected, bizarre, which sets her completely apart. Daughter of a New York or Philadelphia theatre manager, we aren't too certain which, she created a furor in America, danced the most complicated ballets, sang, played tragedy, in short was an infant prodigy; — she came in search of Parisian sanction, for the opinion of Paris agitates even United States barbarians in their world of railroads and steamboats. — For a prodigy, Mlle. Maywood is truly quite something.



Plate II. Domenico Ronzani. ca. 1847

"She is of medium size, very well-built, very young, eighteen years according to calumniators, with black eyes and a wide-awake and savage little face which gambles strongly on being pretty; add to this sinews of steel, joints of a jaguar and an agility approaching that of clowns; for the rest, it would be impossible to be less intimidated by so formidable a test; there she came, under fire of footlights and lorgnettes, which strike fear in the most intrepid, as tranquil as an established dancer; you would have thought that it was simply a matter of her parterre of Yankees; in two or three bounds she cleared this great theatre from backdrop to prompter's box, making those almost horizontal *vols penchés* which made the fame of Perrot the aerien; and then she began to gambol, to piroquette *dans l'air sur elle-même*, to do back

turns with a suppleness and force worthy of Lawrence or Redisha;\* you would have said a rubber ball bouncing on a racquet; she has much elevation and spring; her little legs of a wild doe make steps as long as those of Mlle. Taglioni.

"The costume she wore the day of her first début in *le diable boiteux* was in rather American taste. Picture to yourself a pink waist, pink skirt without white petticoats underneath, and pink tights, the whole embellished with vari-colored passementerie and sequins. A toilette to enchant a rope-dancer (this is not a term of scorn; we adore rope-dancers)! The second appearance in *Tarentule* she was gowned *en paysanne*, with that eternal black bodice and no less inevitable petticoat so lavished on ballets with sylvan pretensions; if the other costume was too savage, this one was much too civilized.

"Mlle. Augusta Maywood will be a good acquisition for the Opera; she has a style of her own, a very remarkable cachet of originality; connoisseurs who attended the coronation festivities at Milan claim that Mlle. Maywood approaches very much the style of Mlle. Cerrito."

Charles Merruau, in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, also discussed this début at length. After grumbling that all good artists who came from foreign parts to train and make their débuts in Paris eventually went back to their native lands to garner rich rewards, he admitted that of course there was nothing else for them to do, since the Parisian audience was the *only* one in the world qualified to give the accolade. Reportedly *la petite* Augusta was to return to America, and undoubtedly her success would pass all expectations. "However that may be," he wrote, "the young dancer made her début Monday in a *pas* which was introduced for her in the first act of *Diable boiteux*. A petite creature, gracious and alive, with light movements, vigorous leg, well-defined gesture, piquant smile, mischievous eye, a pretty face and scarcely fifteen years — and there you have mademoiselle Augusta. Imagine a madcap and frenetic dance, prodigious leaps, leaps which covered the stage in three bounds, *entrechats* combined with *pirouettes* such as would do honor to Perrot, *battements horizontaux* such as Paul did once upon a time, extreme verve, incredible swing, miraculous composure, and you will have an

\* Lawrence and Redisha were English clowns and contortionists then appearing at the Cirque Olympique. See Gautier *L'Art Dramatique en France depuis Vingt-cinq ans*. Vol. I, Ch. XIII, pp. 154-155.

idea of the surprise mixed with pleasure which the apparition of this strange child must have caused on the stage where a few days before one had applauded the poetic dance, the genteel grace of mademoiselle Grahn, and where one had applauded the elegant and voluptuous catchucha of mademoiselle Elssler. Mademoiselle Augusta Maywood was vigorously applauded, as one might easily guess. A part of this success is due to M. Corally, her teacher, whose lessons developed the extraordinary talents of the young dancer and who, if he will temper a trifle this inordinate fervor, will make of his pupil the most original and piquant dancer one could possibly imagine."

There could have been no more auspicious début; the physical equipment, which made comparison to the greatest male dancers and acrobats a feature of both reviews, the *diable au corps*, and completely individual style set her immediately in a unique category. Augusta took her place in the regular company, and appeared in a very special benefit arranged for Elssler in February, 1840. Curiously, in future years, wherever Augusta appeared Fanny had been there shortly before; there is somehow a feeling, for Elssler was notably generous and helpful, that Fanny was instrumental in advancing the little Maywood during those early years.

In any event, the Maywoods, settling down in Paris, were shortly unsettled by their vivacious daughters. Mary Elizabeth eloped with a Mr. Sidney Wilkins, trombone player at the Paris Opéra; she later returned to the parental fold. (Occasionally there is an erroneous reference to Mr. Wilkins as Augusta's husband.) The great blow to their anticipated golden future faded with Augusta's startling marriage.

Theatrical annuals of 1840, which list all major performances, reappearances and débuts of 1839, have an entry under Paris Opéra for January 4th—"Début of M. Charles Mabille (*la muette de Portici*)". This same annual lists Maywood, in company with the Elsslers, Noblet, Leroux, Grahn, and the Dumilâtres, as *première ballerine*. About Charles Mabille there is mystery and confusion. An Auguste Mabille, son of the famous Bal Mabille *patron*, had been a partner of Elssler's shortly before in London; he had an excellent career and was one of the last great *danseurs nobles* at the Opéra. Charles, who was probably his younger brother, is a shadowy figure; it would

seem, despite the 1839 début notice, that they might be the same person, save for the fact that when Charles was in Lisbon during 1844-45, *the Mabille* is appearing in Paris. In 1840 Charles Mabille is listed in the Opera company, and no mention of Auguste. The strange lacunae in the histories of Charles and Auguste have led several interested ballet detectives to the conclusion that they were identical — a happy explanation save for documentary evidence that two separate bodies were in two separate places at the same time. If it had been the great Mabille, moreover, the Maywoods might not have been as upset as they were on losing their gold mine to Mabille *cadet*.

The marriage was a sensation of the Parisian boulevards and London green rooms (Robert Campbell Maywood was not a negligible theatrical figure). On November 4th, 1840, a note in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale* says — "Everyone speaks of the disappearance of Mademoiselle Maywood of the Opéra. The wings are busy with this scandal." The fugitives had appeared in a performance of *Le diable amoureux* and disappeared immediately thereafter. On November 15th the *Revue* further reports that the fugitives were held at Boulogne, thanks to a telegraph order, were returned to Paris and had arrived that day; unless an amiable agreement and a *désistement conseillé par la raison* did not give pause, the parquet would be able to follow the complaint of abduction of a minor, which charge had already been registered in the law journal, and on which Mabille was held. Whatever potent arguments were produced in favor of the marriage are not recorded, but consent was finally given and the suit dropped. The New York *Spirit of the Times* received an account in a London theatrical gossip dispatch and relayed the elopement to her American public, which straightway began to disapprove the headstrong Augusta, although it was clearly stated that the couple expected to go home to the States.

Robert Maywood packed up the rest of the family and returned to America; the Opéra was in doldrums prior to Grisi's engagement, and during 1842 there is no record of Augusta's dancing; she was probably having that baby she allegedly abandoned later, and may well have used that as an excuse not to return immediately. Mary Elizabeth, for technical financial reasons, had become lessee of the Chestnut St. Theatre, and announced the return of her sister "formerly la Petite Augusta."

Maywood himself, in a letter to J. S. Jones, manager of the Tremont Theatre, Boston, dated Sept. 7th, 1842, wrote — “With regard to the possibilities of the present season I may say we expect J. Wallack, Mr. Balls, Augusta Maywood and her husband from Paris. . . . Wallack was to leave on the 4th of this month and Balls about the end — I expect to hear from Mrs. Stirling by the 19th or the 1st of October at latest — Augusta Maywood and her good man will be later.” On Sept. 28th he wrote — “. . . with regard to Augusta, as soon as I know the exact period of her arrival — I'll let you know — and depend upon my taking care of you in the arrangement — and take my word for it she will be the best star of the season, and she has what others want, youth and beauty — with very superior talent and is besides a New Yorker by birth. . . .”

Unfortunately for the family exchequer Augusta never returned. Fundamentally she was above all else a ballerina, who loved dancing to such a degree that she preferred to risk competition and unremitting hard work in order to remain at its creative centre. She undoubtedly knew that an assured fortune awaited her in America; her future in Europe at that point had only an auspicious Paris début and her own conviction as assets. Perhaps she preferred to remain where she felt temperamentally at home, and decided to let her family fend for themselves.

She did not see her future in terms of the Paris Opéra. Charles de Boigne, to whom an engagement in Paris seemed the ultimate good of this world, blamed her marriage, and bitterly exclaimed: “This poor little Augusta Maywood! she couldn't let herself be reengaged by the Opéra; she had too much life, too much future; she thought herself obliged to marry a myrmidon of a dancer, counterfeit and churlish, who peddled her about from city to city. O dancers! will you then always marry dancers?”

In any event, Mabille's marital *colportage* was now dignified by a major engagement. A Sr. A. Porto had assumed management of the Theatro de S. Carlos of Lisbon, and was determined that Lisbon audiences should no longer be known as the world's most patient amateurs. To insure a good ballet company he engaged the amazing Gustavo Carey, one of the great male dancers of his generation, idol of St. Petersburg, who had even successfully braved the virtual ban against male dancers in Paris. Friend and partner of Elssler, his

unusual vocation for an English patronymic indicates that he may have been, like Edmund Kean, one of the four fabulous great-grandchildren of the notable and eccentric British composer Henry Carey. His activities covered, among other engagements, the considerable period of 1827 to 1854 as guest choreographer and male premier at the Vienna Hofburgopernttheater. For the Lisbon season of 1843-1844 (which started Sept. 1st) Carey is listed as choreographer, *los conjuges Mabille* as *primi ballerini*, *los conjuges Montani* as principal mimes, seconded by Luigi and Giuseppa Romolo, Francesco Pintauro, six mimes and thirty-six coryphées.

Augusta's début, in *Giselle*, reported at length in the *Revista Universal Lisbonense* (Tomo III, p. 144) triumphed over a cabal organized by one of the discharged dancers, José Stephene, to demonstrate against the new company. Billed as Senhora Mabille, her Lisbon début exceeded even the Paris ovation. Silva Leal wrote ecstatic notices of the “poetic ballerina” in *Giselle*, of her force, agility and grace in Spanish dances, of her voluptuous appeal, of how she rescued one of Carey's less fortunate ballets, *Rolando e Morgana*, and how incomparable she was in a *cracovienne*. Mabille is never once mentioned; it is clear that his eighteen-year-old wife was the attraction.

Like Elssler, Augusta was never afraid of competition and always generous to newcomers; one such incident should be recorded. Judith Rugalli, twelve-year-old daughter of a Lisbon actress, danced at her mother's benefit a *cracovienne* in imitation of Madame Mabille, who gave her blessing and insured an audience of all local balletophiles. After her triumph young Judith wrote a touching letter to the *Revista Universal*, telling how the art of Madame Mabille so enthused her that in childish dreams she formed the project of this dance; she concludes with a touching tribute to Augusta — “I took my inspiration from the graceful steps of the foreign Sylphide.”

The only carping notice our American prodigy received during her entire stay was in her second season, when she introduced the polka on the Lisbon stage and was accused of substituting a polonaise. In addition to divertissements Augusta danced *Giselle* (the only ballet staged by Mabille), Carey's *Rolando e Morgana*, *Mascaras de Venesa*, *Novo Azor*, *A aldeia polaca*, *O conscripto*, and his restagings of *Bayadère*, *Diable amoureux* and *La*

*Gypsy*. Her reengagement for the season 1844-1845 was announced with joy in an *Alleluia Lyrica* on Nov. 28th, 1844.

There was no mention of any rift in the *ménage Mabille* until February 6th, 1845, when a cryptic paragraph, titled *Ma Bille* (a pun on the Portuguese word for document, pronouncement or tax decree) says: "Everyone admired Madame Mabille's ethereal qualities in *Giselle*, her gracefulness in *la Cracovienne*, and her exuberance in *le Diable amoureux*. She outdid herself — she did not fly, she veritably volatized herself with a verve and at the same time a grace that left the audience gasping. Madame Mabille, it was the unanimous verdict, was a lovely spirit. But the worst of it is, as the psychologists of opera put it, that spirits which depart do not return." On February 28th, however, she is still dancing, in spite of the rumors, and the critic notes parenthetically that he did not propose "to enter into an examination of the stories current in this respect." Whatever occurred precipitated some sort of upheaval, which in turn sired a scandal in the States.

The New York Mirror, July 12th, 1845, prints the following communication: "The desertion of her husband by Augusta Maywood, or rather Madame Mabille, the danseuse, is mentioned by the Paris correspondent of the Courrier des Etats-Unis — it took place February last at Lisbon, while they were playing an engagement at the St. Charles theatre. She left the house in the evening, leaving a letter for her husband in which she says:

"At this moment I find myself in a position, which will not permit me to remain any longer in your house — our characters are unsuited, and my affections for a long time have been placed upon another, and I doubt not that our mutual happiness will be increased by my departure.

"I accuse you of nothing — since we have been married you have always been a devoted and good husband, but unhappily our relative situations do not accord, and with another woman less exalted than me I doubt not you will find more happiness.

"Pardon me if I have caused you discomfort, I know how much you love our little one, I need not commend it to your care, I only ask that it may never know the guilt of its mother."

"Monsieur Mabille is an actor and the son of a celebrated professor of dancing, and the lover is also an actor attached to the Lisbon theatre."



Ceresa Gambardella

Plate III. Ceresa Gambardella. ca. 1840

The fact that the Mabilles were dancing together at Masoni's benefit toward the end of May in itself gives the lie to this flight, abetted by the obviously phoney style of the alleged document, which leaves the child curiously sex-less, and is written with the literary distinction of a third-class melodrama.



Plate IV. Augusta Maywood. 1851  
Iconography, page 19, No. 4

More tangible evidence that they were together is offered in program files of the Vienna Hofburg-operntheater at Harvard. During the season 1845-1846 Augusta Maywood and Mabille are dancing there together. Augusta resumed her maiden name; very likely their domestic difficulties had been rooted in Mabille's professional jealousy.

Gustavo Carey was committed to one of his usual engagements as *premier danseur* in Vienna for the autumn of 1845. Through him Augusta received the coveted post of *prima ballerina*, with the sanction of Elssler, who had just finished an engagement there. Mabille went along as solo-dancer. The excellent Anton Guerra was choreographer and ballet-master that season. Maywood's débüt, as *Giselle*, with Carey dancing *Albrecht*, took place in October, and this ballet was performed repeatedly through November. On December 8th Mabille makes his appearance with a *pas de deux* composed by himself and danced with Augusta, inserted in Guerra's ballet *Der Madchenraub in Venedig* (music by Mathias Strebinger of the theatre staff). Carey moved on to other en-

gagements and his place as premier was taken by Pasquale Borri, then one of Italy's greatest dancers, later one of her greatest choreographers, and long one of Maywood's partners. Mabille continued to arrange special *pas*, while Augusta moves from one lead to another — *Es ist ein Scherz*, *Manfred*, and *Die Hochzeit des Bachus*. The final and concise record of the Maywood-Mabille parting was not in the Lisbon letter but in the Hofburgtheater records; "Abgegangen: Hr. Solotänzer Mabille. Neu engagiert: Mad. Maywood."

Henceforth Augusta guided her own destinies with God's help and hard work. In September, 1846, the season opened with a revival of Guerra's "*grosses fantastisches ballet*" *Manfred*. In November Victor Bartholomin was engaged as choreographer and ballet-master; the company was augmented by Beau and one of the omnipresent Mérantes as *premier danseurs*. For Maywood, Bartholomin created a number of ballets — *Die Zauberlampe*, *Elina oder die Rückkehr in's Dorf*, and *Ein Landisches Fest*. These last two (with music by Wilhelm Reuling) were in the Bartholomin-Monplaisir repertoire for their American tour the following season.

Pasquale Borri resumes his place in the company, augmented by a famous guest star. In January, 1847, Eraklito Nikitin, of the St. Petersburg Opera, first Russian male dancer to appear outside of his prescribed precincts, arrived in Vienna. He was a brilliant performer and created a sensation in his very brief European *tournée*. Customarily distinguished visiting artists at the Hofburgtheater received larger billing than resident stars. La Maywood demanded — and got — equal billing with Nikitin and Adelaide Mérante, also a guest performer. They must have given an extraordinary performance — Maywood as *Giselle*, Nikitin the *Albrecht* and Mérante as *Myrrtha*. As usual Augusta seems to have been on excellent terms with her fellow-artists. Nikitin, with an engagement for La Scala already set, probably added his recommendation for her engagement there at the famous 1848 carnival. Although but twenty-two years old, with a heavy performance schedule, she found time to coach the young Pauline Santi, who appeared on February 26th, 1847, in a *pas de deux* with Borri, programmed in heavy letters as a "Schülerin der Mad. Maywood."

In May she was dancing the title role of Perrot's *Katharina oder die Töchter des Banditen*, staged by the new ballet-master Domenico Ronzani, thence-

forward one of her most important associates and later an outstanding factor in American dance history. Ronzani had an excellent reputation as a mime; several members of his family turn up in various Italian companies. Domenico had appeared intermittently at La Scala since 1831, working under such choreographers as Antonio Cortesi, Livio Morosini, Antonio Monticini and Bernardo Vestris. He was for some time impresario at La Fenice of Venice. He gained a reputation staging ballets of the greatest choreographers when they were not available. For example, in 1846 he staged Perrot's *Esmeralda* for Elssler's guest appearance in Vienna. His association with Maywood as director, agent and impresario gave him essential experience to undertake his American tour a decade later.

Through her growing Viennese réclame the directors of La Scala at Milan decided to engage her for *carnevale e quaresima*, 1848. That particular season was one of such brilliance that a nostalgic glance at its roster is in order. The choreographers were Perrot, Augusto Huss and Andrea Palladini; *primi ballerini* — Fanny Elssler, Augusta Maywood, Carolina Vendt, Giulio Perrot, Eraklito Nikitin; *primi mimi* — Paolina Monti, Effisio Catte, Bagnoli-Quattri, Gaspare Pratesi, Domenico Viganó, &c.

The ballets included a restaging of Henry's *L'assedio di Calais* with Maywood and Nikitin re-united in principal rôles, by Huss, Cortesi's *Silfide* (182?) restaged by Palladini, and the première of Perrot's great fantastic ballet *Faust*, the title rôle created by Elssler and Maywood; Fanny danced *Marguerite* the opening night, Augusta followed the second performance — a fact which Mr. Beaumont has carefully ignored in his notes on this ballet. According to the *Gazzetta Privilegiata di Milan* (March 8, 1848), Perrot was still working on the ballet after its première, "omitting, changing, substituting and abbreviating." It was Maywood whom he directed in this perfection by performance process.

Actually it was on Maywood's young shoulders that the mantle of Fanny was adjusted, and for the next decade it is Maywood who is an outstanding interpreter of the great dramatic rôles in romantic ballet. With Elssler she shared the most coveted title in Italy — *prima ballerina e prima mima assoluta*. In 1854 when Carolina Pochini attempted *Esmeralda* at Milan, the comparison was to Elssler and Maywood.

At this point, with engagements offered from all parts of Italy, Augusta decided on a course which was the pioneer effort of its type. Hitherto important soloists had filled engagements at various opera houses taking a partner here, another there, depending on the local stage director to set productions in order. Augusta joined forces with the Lasiná brothers, Giovanni Battista and Giuseppe, to organize a semi-permanent company which toured Italy; Giovanni was an indifferent choreographer, a good *metteur en scène*, a superlative business manager. The *premier* was Antonio Parlerini, of the renowned dancing family. Vicenzo Schiano was *primo mimo* and the excellent Teresa Gambardella *prima mima*. This was the period during which Italy produced some of its most superb male dancers; the situation was radically different from Paris, where the male dancer had become an adjunct or mere prop, where mimes capable of interpreting the great dramatic ballets who were yet fine dancers had almost ceased to exist. Augusta danced with the greatest in Italy. Even a superficial reading of Italian theatrical annuals and criticism establishes the standing of her company; subsidiary rôles likewise were entrusted to good performers; Lasiná even had scenery designed and transported to smaller houses, and only local corps de ballet had to be enlisted.

Parenthetically it might be amusing to see what Weymss had to say about Augusta in his reminiscences (New York, 1847). "She . . . married; thus blasting all hopes of fortune to her parents. An undutiful child never made a good wife. She has deserted her husband, and the heartless letter in which she recommended her child to the care of its father, at the moment she was abandoning him for the arms of a paramour, proves that her heart is even lighter than her heels. The very brilliance of her opening in life has been her ruin; the stage again pointed at as impure and immoral; and Augusta Maywood, who should have been, and who would have been the pride of it, as an American artiste — who had gained the highest honors abroad — has become its shame; and thus I draw the veil upon her and her crimes forever, hoping that she may never attempt to appear upon the stage of her native country again; and if she does, that her countrywomen, whose character for purity she has disgraced, will drive her from it indignantly, as a warning to others not to follow her example." — Augusta did not bother to deny the

canard. She was far too busy to trouble her pretty head with Weymssian fulminations.

Italian journals exceeded themselves in hyperbole. The adjectives graceful, light, bold, forceful, harmonious, audacious, sentimental, vivacious, incomparable, and unique; the titles "queen of the air," "new Terpsichore," "gracious Sylphide"; the comparisons "contemporary to Taglioni, Elssler and Cerrito, she shares with them the highest place in the kingdom of Terpsichore," "Maywood, as always incomparable both as mime and dancer," and repeated judgments on the "force, dexterity, litherness, grace and elegance of this exquisite dancer, and her genius for miming" become clamorous. Souvenir books of poetry celebrate her appearances, memorial plaques are cast, and lithographs of her sold to that general public which was *fanatizzò* for la Maywood. If the Italians liked her the compliment was returned. Save for one excursion to the scene of her earlier triumphs in Vienna, Augusta devoted her career to the Italian theatre.

In 1849 she makes a happy return to La Scala in Perrot's *Faust* staged by Ronzani, *Giselle* and a rather mediocre Ronzani spectacular ballet *L'orfana della Suleide*. From 1850 to 1854 she tours Italy, working with Ronzani or the Lasinà brothers. Her repertoire included *Esmeralda*, *Caterina la Figlia del Bandito*, *Giselle*, *Faust*, *La jolie fille de Gand*, *La Zingara*, *La Vivandiera*, Ronzani's *La sposa di Appenzello*, *Ertà la Regina dell'Elfride*, *Zelia o il velo magico* (sometimes credited to Livio Morosini, actually a version of Guerra's 1841 *Il velo incantato*), Lasinà's versions of *Faust*, titled *Mefistofele* and *Il sogno di un alchimista* respectively, and his original ballets (rated by Cambiarsi as *cattivo*) *Una festa da ballo* and *L'araba*, Morosini's *I Suliotti*, and divertissements in such operas as *Spagnuoli al Peru* and *Rigoletto*.

In 1853 she appears for the first time in a ballet by Giuseppe Rota (1822-1865), one of the foremost Italian choreographers of the second half-century, famous for ensembles, good-naturedly known as "lover of the happy ending," whose ballets remained for generations in Italian repertoire. Cambiarsi rates *Un fallo*, first ballet of the autumn season in Milan in which they are associated, as *ottimo*, or superlative (it had fifty-four performances).

Even more interesting to us is the November 10th premiere — *I bianchi ed i negri*, from the popular novel *Il capenna di Zio Tom* — our Uncle

*Tom's Cabin!* Fantastic as it may seem, scarcely two years after its first American appearance as a serial, and but one year after its first American dramatization, Milan was applauding a theme which is an ironic commentary on a certain Ethiopian campaign. The first Italian edition of *Uncle Tom* was published in 1853, so that Rota had lost no time in adapting it. The music was by Paolo Giorza and the social overtones of the libretto were termed "allegorical." This ballet was often revived, sometimes as *La Capenna di Tom* by Ferdinand Pratesi, and by Rota himself through 1863. The critic of *Il Pirata* (correspondent to Turin, October 23rd, 1853) reported: "The first and second acts are of absolute beauty, and the *ballabile* of the negroes aroused pronounced enthusiasm. Catte and Razzanelli stood out prominently. La Maywood was as usual an exquisite dancer." Although no record of distribution is available here, Effisio Catte, the renowned mime, was undoubtedly *Uncle Tom*, Assunta Razzanelli, prima mima assoluta, *Topsy*, and presumably la Maywood was little *Eva*, an assignment which would have infuriated the American press.

At this point it might be well to mention the other great sin of which Augusta was accused by every journalist and theatre historian in America — filial ingratitude. The American point of view is summed up in a dispatch dated December 10th, 1852, and the commentary which accompanied its publication in the *Daily Evening Traveller* (Boston, January 15th, 1853):

"A correspondent of the *Boston Traveller*, says the furore of the Italians for Miss Maywood's dancing has been most astonishing. She is from Philadelphia, and is really a wonderful dancer, unsurpassed, perhaps, in her vein. If we can credit the newspaper critics here, she excels Cerito, Elssler, and even Taglioni herself. So accurate is her time that the music seems to emanate from her, and if her grace has been equalled or exceeded by others, her activity and endurance are unrivalled. She has engagements for three years in advance. All the while she was in Florence the excitement continued unabated. Prices doubled; there was no end to the applause and callings out, often four or more times successively; and on the occasion of her benefit it took three carriages to carry away the bouquets. To handle such as were cast at her feet required no slight muscular effort. They were, without exaggeration, as large as flour barrels. As accustomed to

exertion as is Miss Maywood, she absolutely staggered under the weight. They were most beautifully done up with ribbons. The shower of flowers from the Duke of Talleyrand's box, nephew of the late Prince, was particularly heavy." &c.

We have a few words to say upon this subject. The above person is an adopted daughter of Robert Campbell Maywood, some years since distinguished as the Lessee and Manager of the Chestnut St. Theatre in this city. He expended thousands upon the child Augusta, who since her European residence has fallen from that position of respectability adorning virtue and integrity, and in their declining days left Mr. and Mrs. Maywood neglected and in abject poverty.

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
to have a thankless child."

Yet even at this time Robert Campbell Maywood was obtaining a haven with Augusta in Italy! Of the other discredits the first advanced is that Mr. Maywood spent huge sums on Augusta's education; one might also note that he exploited her talents and that part of his investment paid dividends in her early engagements. Her elopement, considered a direct affront to the parents, may have been precipitated by some intolerable family situation.

In any event, after failing to recoup his fortunes in America, Robert C. Maywood joined Augusta in Italy, where he lived with her several years in what even the prejudiced Phelps admits was "great affluence." In 1855, so the story proceeds in Ireland's history of the American stage, Robert Maywood returned to America, bearing a letter which Augusta purportedly had admonished him not to open until he was on the boat, which he expected contained a substantial sum of money. When this letter was opened it allegedly contained a most bitter denunciation, and no money. Mr. Maywood had a stroke and died in the Troy Infirmary a year later. Both her mother and sister died in reduced circumstances, while Augusta, according to Phelps (1880) "amassed a fortune and retired to a half million dollar villa at Lake Como," that cosmopolitan retreat for retired bankers and ballerinas.

There is no attempt here to whitewash Augusta. It isn't necessary. However one is impelled to note a consistent attitude in the American journals. It was one of a certain resentment, not only that Augusta's private life was considered beyond the pale, but that she seemed to thrive so well. It would have been so much simpler to point to her

in horror if after a period of time she had lost her popularity, was ridden by some such vice as drink which ruined her looks, was impoverished, and generally represented an accepted nineteenth century American tableau of the wages of sin.

For a certainty Augusta had become identified with the Italian theatre. There is scarcely a reference to her as a *celebre danzatrice americana*; she is invariably mentioned as one of the glories of Italian ballet. In 1852, when she dances in *Il sogno di un alchimista* at Firenze, the little Teatro Mecanico in the Anfiteatro Goldoni presents a marionette version of her production. To be immortalized by the *fantoccini* meant a firm foothold in the indigenous culture.

Bologna, Padua, Trieste, Brescia, Venice, Milan, Verona, Naples, Ancona, Ferrara, Ravenna, Forlì, Firenze, Genoa, Vicenza, Viterbo, Turin and Rome were in her itinerary. Her period was the last great epoch in Italian ballet. Her colleagues were of such stature that they demand at least a passing note.

The great dancers in Italy, as in every ballet center, were *di rango francese*, schooled in the French tradition; thus training exclusively in the Italian school, which accounted for superb mimes, still left la Gambardella, as *prima ballerina italiana*,

#### Plate V. Program: Vienna, 1854



22. Mai 1854.

*H. A. Hoftheater nächst dem Kärnthnerthore.*

(Mit aufgehobenem Abonnement.)

Zum Vortheile der Frau Maywood Augusta,  
erste Tänzerin der Academie impériale in Paris.

# Esmeralda.

Romantisches Ballett in drei Akten und fünf Tableaux, komponirt von Verrot und in die Scene  
gelegt von Herrn Domenico Ronzani. Musik von Cäesar Vugni.

#### Personen:

Esmeralda -	- Fr. Maywood M.	Gisolda -	- Fr. Sonner.
Claudio Troilo	- Fr. Ronzani.	Gräfin Alotra -	- Fr. Boes.
Pâdus	- Fr. Baum.	Egdon	- Fr. Schmidberger.
Pietro ein Dichter	- Fr. Borelli.	Oberster Richter	- Fr. Mallison.
Dusimodo	- Fr. Piretti.	Immler Richter	- Fr. Springer.
Bettler, Siegerin, Woll-, Cavaliere, Pagen, Hofsoldaten, Gesölge von Claudio Troilo.			

#### Vor kommende Tänze:

1. Tableau: Zigeuner-Ballabile, ausgeführt vom Balletteor.
2. Tableau: La Turandate, ausgeführt von Fr. Maywood und Herren Boeli.
3. Tableau: La Legion, plus d'action dansante, ausgeführt von Fr. Maywood und Frn. Borelli.
4. Tableau: Pas de trois, ausgeführt von den Herren Lanner, Essteller und Neger, und begleitet von den Damen des Balletteors.
5. Tableau: La Bacchante, ein Tanz, ausgeführt vom ganzen Balletteor.

Die P. T. Besitzer von Auskünften werden erlaubt, dieselben beim Comite gleich Mal dem Balletteor vorzulegen.

#### Zugliche Preise bei den italienischen Opern:

Ein Vorzug 1., 2., 3. Stufen im Parterre 20 fl. - fr. Ein Vorzug im 4. Stiege . . . . .	1 fl. 20 fl.
Ein Vorzug im Parterre . . . . .	2 .. 40 ..
dito auf der großen Galerie im 3. Stiege, 1. Reihe . . . . .	2 .. 20 ..
Ein Vorzug auf der großen Galerie im 3. Stiege, 2. oder 3. Reihe . . . . .	1 .. 40 ..

Aufzug 7 Uhr.

in second place. Nevertheless certain phases of Italian training were unsurpassed, and many dancers *di rango francese*, although not formed by Blasis as he claimed, undoubtedly passed through his training *pour s'y perfectionné*, in the way that Pavlova and Nijinsky worked with Enrico Cecchetti long after their professional débuts. It is imperative to realize that Italy had male dancers of such brilliance that any estimate of la Maywood must take into account the necessity of measuring up to and surpassing them. In addition to almost acrobatic ease of technique they had a most rigorous training to supplement what seems a natural aptitude for pantomime. A glance at Italian prints in the Chaffee Collection, which revolutionize any usual concept of the aesthetic of Italian nineteenth century lithography, discovers a gallery of extraordinary people. There is in these portraits a curious mixture of extreme sensitiveness and extreme literalness, rarely elements of great personal beauty but always wonderfully compelling faces and eloquent bodies. It was the unhappy capitulation of Italian ballet to spectacular opera that foreshadowed the end of this superb *primo ballarino*.

Maywood danced with the greatest — Pasquale Borri, Antonio Pallerini, Giovanni Lepri, Ferdinando Croce, Davide Mochi and Antonio Lorenzoni; the latter four had worked with Blasis. (Parenthetically, Lepri passed on certain Blasis traditions to his pupil Enrico Cecchetti, so that we maintain a derivative clear into the twentieth century.) By 1857, to the dismay of discerning critics, a new group of male premiers strong on technique but with complete lack of taste develops with the new type of ballet; one finds the word "vulgar" applied to the exertions of Carlo Foriani, one of Maywood's last partners.

This débâcle was due to increasing concessions made by choreographers to opera. The two most encouraging figures were Giuseppe Rota, then developing brilliantly after a brief while as a mime, and Pasquale Borri, turning more and more to choreography after a proud career as *premier danseur*. Neither was able, or probably desired, to change the course of Italian choreography, to which both gave its final distinction.

In the spring of 1854 Augusta returned to Vienna with Borri, under the direction of Ronzani, in *Esmeralda* and the impresario's own new fantastic ballet *Das Goldene Pferd*, later a great success of his American tour (as *The Golden Horse*). In

addition to all his other duties the remarkable Ronzani was yet taking an active part in performances, maintaining his reputation as an accomplished mime. On the playbill it is apparent that Paris was still arbiter of ballet, for Maywood's billing reminds her public that she was "first dancer of the Académie impériale in Paris."

By June she is back in Padua on the first lap of a new tour which terminated in December, 1854-January, 1855, with an engagement for the Trieste carnival. Of the three choreographers originally scheduled for that season, Monticini had just died, Cortesi was immobilized by a stroke and Galzerani not yet recovered from a serious illness; thus Augusta, who had always been able to carry even so slight a work as Ronzani's *Sposa di Appenzello*, consented to dance in *Evellina di Lesormes*, a ballet composed by her long-time associate Vicenzo Schiano. An excellent mime, he was unable to cope with choreography, and inevitably tackled an involved libretto; the music was by one Scaramelli, a local theatre musician. Even a well-disposed press and the dancing of Maywood and Lepri failed to save this unhappy work. Maywood terminated her contract because of illness (Trieste gossip had it that this illness was caused by the chilly reception of *Evellina di Lesormes*), the only time she ever interrupted her scheduled tour.

For the remainder of 1855 she resumed her classic roles, save for an appearance in Rota's *Il trionfo dell' innocenza*, based on the story of il Fornaretto, the young noble falsely accused of murder. As a Rome dispatch to *Il Pirata* of Turin notes, since il Fornaretto had died once, to what purpose have him die again? Thus an elaborate libretto manoeuvred a happy ending. Maywood's reception in this ballet was excellent, with Ferdinando Croce acclaimed as *il Fornaretto*. But, and this is a most unfortunate but for the history of Italian ballet, the critics wanted even more mime.

Augusta was famously equipped to satisfy this public clamor, and in her last years as a dancer she took as choreographer Filippo Termanini, who represented the unfortunate, ultimate and logical degeneration of Vigano's principals. He provided her with what became a "vehicle" just as *La dame aux camélias* was a vehicle for Bernhardt; coincidentally, these vehicles had the same theme. In 1857 la Maywood appeared in Termanini's *Rita Gauthier*, and until her retirement some five years later, found it her most powerful drawing card, associated with her name, demanded by her public. It is somehow in character that she was able to close her career



Plate VI. Maywood as Rita Gauthier. 1856. See Iconography, page 19, No. 7

with a financially profitable work, completely typical of its period, which none-the-less demanded extraordinary artistic resources in execution.

The critic of *L'Opinione* (Turin) astutely sensed the lack of aesthetic justification, but laid it to "choreographers who avidly extend claws on some theme which presents itself before them and transform it, adjusting it to their talents and almost making a parody of it to introduce into it the eternal *pas de deux* and the final curtain of joy with analagous *ballabile*." To remember just how powerful a realistic drama *Camille* was in its period, and that our critic considered it "more than anything else an analysis of human emotions, an anatomy of the human heart," is difficult today. Our anonymous critic felt bitterly about the whole affair. "The Teatro Carignano, which for two consecutive years was the temple in which one celebrated the apotheosis of the Lady of the Camellias, has now become the instrument of her profanation; to the laments of Violetta succeed the cabrioles of Rita Gauthier, in place of the impassioned melodies of the swan of Bussetto, are played for us the potpourris assembled by who knows what master; in a few words, instead of the sublime concepts of Verdi and Dumas we have had the sublime pasticci of Signor Termanini. . . And it is very true that Signor Termanini was constrained to create a new Lady of the Camellias, to falsify the concept which informs the book by Dumas, and to change even the facts which serve as foundation to the actions. For the pathetic death of Marguerite Gauthier the choreographer has substituted a dream, after which the protagonist awakens repentant, chastened, happy and contented, and wife of the object of her affections. This is, as anyone can see, a new version of *Victorine*, of *la jolie fille de Gand*, of the *Rose of Florence*, and what can be born from such an agglomeration of old and disparate ideas is better left to the imagination of the reader. . . A more unhappy thought was to have this mimic action accompanied by the music of *La Traviata*, which was found to be in continuous discrepancy with the stage action, and sometimes has a tinge of the ridiculous, as for example, towards the dénouement, where the motive *Parigi o cara noi lasceremo* is reworked awkwardly to express mal-apropos the joy of Rita Gauthier who is reunited to her lover.

"If the argument of the ballet was selected with little discernment, if the music of *Traviata* became in this case a contradiction, it is necessary to confess however that Signor Termanini gave proof of choreographic genius in disposing the ballabile, which, although they recall others already noted

by the Turin public, succeed to a great enough degree nevertheless, and place in a beautiful setting the advances that have been made by the pupils of the Royal School of Ballet. And here to this is added the presence of la signora Maywood, the dancer who, especially in *pas* that require force and dramatic impulse, has no rivals, and it is no wonder that the public closed its eyes to all the absurdities of libretto and music, and absolved Termanini from all his sins."

Of course what our critic is upset about is desecration of opera, whereas it should have been desecration of ballet that needed worry. For here we have destruction of the ballet as dance, by opera, which eventually vitiated all other art-forms in Italy. Even in the twentieth century when a new art-form — the motion-picture — appeared, it too was subjugated to opera, as one can see in the film *Cabiria*. Thus opera music, suitable or not, was grafted on to ballet; five-act opera librettos were made into three-act choréodramas, with interminable vocal choruses changed to interminable *ballabile*, lengthy recitative transformed into mime, and intermittent ballet *tours de force* replacing the arias.

Termanini created another ballet for Augusta, *Elena Douglas*, which was a great favorite. Nothing, however, approached the demand for *Rita Gauthier*. Through 1862, shortly after which she retired, she was acclaimed in this hybrid. Yet, play her *Ritas* and *Elenas* though she did, we have her measure as an artist. For until the last, consistently, she danced her two great and favorite ballets — Perrot's *Esmeralda* and *Faust*, the two supreme examples of romantic ballet which maintained the fine balance between dance and mime.

For the rest, after her retirement Augusta taught briefly in Vienna, then retired again to Italy, this time as Madame Gardini. Of her second husband no information is presently available, nor have we to date discovered her obituary. Her monument remains in the prose and pictures of the Italian *Risorgimento*. The appended iconography is doubtless but a fraction of Maywood prints.

All her portraits show the enigmatic Mona Lisa smile, striking eyes, determined chin, and well-turned little body. Although her private life was both public and unexplained, the only life which really counted was her existence as an artist. No good history of Italian ballet omits Augusta Maywood. Perhaps it would be wisest to emulate the Italian press of her period, which scrupulously passed no judgement on her, save as a dancer. For us she is, to date, our first and only American *prima ballerina e prima nimba assoluta*.

## ICONOGRAPHY

1. Portrait, full-length, dancing, (in oils or water-color?), painted by Henry Inman, New York, 1838; unrecorded since 1846.
2. Lithograph. La Petite Augusta — Aged 12 Years — In the Character of Zoloe, in the Bayadere. — Drawn on stone by E.W.C. (Clay) — Printed and published by H. R. Robinson, New York, 1838. (See Cover.)
3. The Harvard College Theatre Collection and the George Chaffee Ballet Collection have each a water-color of No. 2 above. These differ between them only in color details; both are unsigned. They may be by the original artist or one or both by Augustus Toedteberg, who executed such works for his superb extra-illustrated works on the American Theatre.
4. Lithograph. Ad Augusta Maywood (sic) — la Societa della Barcaccia nuova offriva nell' Autunno del 1851. — G. Calza dis. dal vero. (To Augusta Maywood — A new Souvenir from the Barcaccia Society Drawn from life by G. Calza.) — Minardi lit. — Litografia Via Ponte di Ferro 1055. — (Vignette; 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins. wide x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  ins. high.) (Plate IV)
5. American Process Print of No. 4, published by A. Toedteberg, 'Portraits of Actors, reproduced from rare originals', Brooklyn, N.Y., 1893. (5 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$  h.)
6. Lithograph. Ad Augusta Maywood — Imparegibile Danzatrice (Incomparable Dancer) — In Ancona nella Primavera (Spring) del (18)53. — Litog. Maggi. — (Vignette; on India paper; 7 x 9 h.) (See Frontispiece.)
7. Lithograph. Ad Augusta Maywood — nella Primavera del 1856 in Ancona — Atto (Act) I nel Ballo 'Rita Gauthier'. — Aug. Bedetti dis. — Ancona, Lit. Flli. Pieroni. — (Oval, in oblong ornamental border in gold; 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  h.) (Plate VI)
8. Mr. George Chaffee has also seen and noted, but not with precise specifications, another Italian print of Maywood, a half-length study of the dancer as Rita Gauthier.

In the Theatre Collection of the Castello Sforzesca, Milan, Italy, four further souvenirs of Maywood are preserved and recorded in its catalogue, 'Ritratti di Musicisti ed Artisti di Teatro', etc., (Milan, 1934), which we note as follows.

9. Lithograph. Augusta Maywood — in Ferrara la Primavera del 1852. — (Other details precisely as for No. 4 above, and same design; obviously a re-issue. On India paper, 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 8 h. See 'Ritratti', No. 2791.)
10. Lithograph. Ad Augusta Maywood — Ravenna Plaudente, 1852. — Miardi lit. (Bologna) — Lit. Angiolini. — (Three-quarter length, front, in costume, with facsimile signature. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  h. 'Ritratti', No. 2792.)
11. Lithograph. Ad Augusta Maywood — gli Anconitani nella Primavera del 1853. — A. Bedetti dis. — Ancona, Lit. Pieroni. — (Three-quarter length, front, in costume; on India paper; 6 x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  h. 'Ritratti', No. 2793.)
12. Lithograph. Augusta Maywood — Daniele dis. — (Plate to) Galleria Teatrale, Torino, 1857. — (Full-length, front, dancing; 10 x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  h. 'Ritratti', No. 2795.)

Note: It is entirely likely that both Portuguese and Austrian souvenir prints of Maywood exist; a Paris print may also have been issued. We have never seen any nor come across references to them, but we suspect that they are to be found.

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This is the first opportunity that has offered itself to me to acknowledge my debt to Mr. George Chaffee, his collection, his critical acumen, and his generosity in making these available to those of us who honor ourselves by saying that we are his colleagues; he not only checked the Maywood iconography but also extended his interest and enthusiasm. Mrs. Wilbur M. Raymond, Assistant to Dr. Van Lennap, helped "over and above the line of duty", searched for and uncovered programs, clippings and a miscellany of information. Mr. Kenneth Donohue checked my Italian translations; Mr. Fred Reinfeld translated the Portuguese material.

M.H.W.

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### Illustrations:

Program — Vienna\* Courtesy Harvard Theatre Collection

Rita Gauthier — \* Courtesy Civica Raccolta delle Stampe di Milano and Lillian Moore

All other illustrations \* Courtesy George Chaffee

